

KARO-ECHO Newsletter 05-08-2018

The KARO ECHO Net meets on 146.415 MHz Simplex each Thursday evening immediately after the West Contra Costa RACES Net, but never before 1900 local time.

The West Costa County ACS/RACES Net meets each Thursday on 145.110 MHz repeater (TX down 600 Hz with PL 82.5) at 1845 local time.

KARO-ECHO meets in person at 7:30 PM on the second Monday of each month at the Kensington Community Center, 59 Arlington Ave, Kensington, CA 94707 in the upper East Room. Ample parking is available. The next meeting is this **Monday, May, 14, 2018**.

KAROECHO.NET NEW WEB PAGE

Please visit the new KARO-ECHO Webpage at <https://www.karoecho.net/> for useful documents and announcements. Note that the old Karo-echo Wiki has been abandoned.

Thanks to Rob, K6RJM, the KARO-ECHO IT manager and web page master who has created this very fast, easy to use, and very useful page that is populated with all the training information that one needs to be a competent radio operator when a disaster strikes our neighborhoods.

Also if you are on Facebook, contribute to the Karo-Echo Facebook Page at <https://www.facebook.com/karoecho/>

Training Work Group Activity

KaroEcho Training Work Group has designed a training guide to help members identify what they need to do in order to improve their skills. This guide is broken down to 4 levels. Level A, Advanced Level B, Level C Extra Class, and Level D MAT Trained. What level are you and what is your next step?

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1b52QimF_k6WY90aHIPpnoEvmmL5cp1pd/view

On every KE Thursday evening net there will be a training session and/or discussion. On the March 22, training net there were 19 stations reporting. A test message was sent as a message handling drill. The message was rated as moderate difficulty. Perfect Copy: Diane KK6RED, Jamuel KM6HBO, and Mike KM6CXI. Congratulations!

Conclusion: More message handling practice is needed.

On the **April 26** Thursday evening net there was a test of radio coverage throughout the Kensington/El Cerrito neighborhoods. 15 stations reported in and were asked who they heard and did not hear giving signal reports (readability and signal strength).

Results: Predictably, stations using hand held radios with rubber duck antennas were zero copy from one hand held to another. They were marginal or zero copy copy with other stations who were using outdoor gain antennas. All stations with outdoor gain antennas were able to copy other stations with outdoor gain antennas.

Conclusion: Rubber duck antennas evidence less than unity gain (- dbi). Although they may be useful accessing line of sight repeaters, they are unreliable means of communication simplex unless the two stations are in close proximity and/or outside of a building. Therefore, for reliable disaster communications operators should be equipped with portable antenna capabilities in accordance with "best practices".

Action Item: KaroEcho will provide recommendations and training for such antennas as portable magnet mount antennas mounted on pie pan sheets, oven pans, sheet metal rectangles, or other metallic surfaces capable of providing an adequate ground plane. Training and advice will be offered regarding the safe use of portable J-Poles, loops, tripod masts, and other vertical gain antennas that can be used portable in the field. A joint presentation by the Training and Elmering Work Groups will present a show and tell at the upcoming May 14 meeting. **Bring your own portable antenna (BYOPA).** **There will be a question and answer period afterwards.**

On the May 3, 2018 Training Net (14 stations reporting) we tested our message handling skills with a difficult message containing mixed groups (letters and numbers), initials, symbols and punctuation (such as decimal points, etc. It can get worse, but not much worse. We also practiced getting fills as well as becoming familiar with the ICS-213 message form. a medium difficulty ICS 213 Message handling drill was run.

Only two stations sent in perfect copy of the test message; KM6CXI, Mike and K6RJM, Rob. Congratulations. Two out of 14 is not a very bad start, but indicates that we need to do better. We also need to increase our skills in obtaining fills.

Cogent Points:

Although some older operators believe that they are perfect, accurate and efficient message handling requires years of practice if we are not to waste valuable bandwidth during disasters. After over 60 years of formal written message handling experience, I always can brush up and improve. In over 60 years of traffic handling I knew very few traffic handlers who were flawless.

Action Item: Another message handling drill is scheduled for this coming May 10 Net.

Elmering/Mentoring Work Group has formed to help newcomers to the hobby to learn the ropes and also to help those with a physical disability to help install antennas. An Elmer is ham jargon for mentor. We all have had one or more.

The Outreach/Recruiting Work Group met April 24 and stuffed envelopes with a snazzy and attractive brochure designed by Rob, K6RJM. The envelopes were mailed to all new hams in Kensington and El Cerrito since 2016 (15 new hams). Thanks to Hal, KK6NDF and Rob, K6RJM for their fine efforts. We received one response so far and are looking forward to more.

Another mailing is all ready to go out this week to the hams who responded to past mailings as far back as 2009; but who were not followed up on. We will report here on the Newsletter regarding these outcomes.

El Cerrito Senior Center and Tassajara Park are undergoing a communications equipment transition. The El Cerrito Senior Center has lost its lease with the School Board and will be relocating in trailers next to City Hall. Since both City Hall and Fire Station 71 (located across the street) already have antennas and radios installed; the radio and antenna at the Senior Center will be relocated. One proposal is to move it to Tassajara Park which is located near the far North East region of Kensington/El Cerrito CERT district. Mike, KM6CXI and Chief Janes will address this transition at the next meeting.

Proposed AGENDA: KARO-ECHO Meeting May 14, 2018

The meeting will begin promptly at 7:30 PM followed by the approval of the Minutes. Additions to the agenda will be entertained after the proposed agenda is read. Email proposed items to Hal, KK6NDF. Then old business, followed by new business, and followed by the monthly program, a drill, practice, and/or education. Please bring a copy of the proposed agenda to the meeting. The agenda will be uploaded by May 13 and found on <https://www.karoecho.net/documents> under May_2018_Agenda.doc

Simulated Emergency Test (SET) Planning Committee

A hands-on on the air radio test is being planned for this summer for KARO-ECHO. We will test radio simplex comms to and from all 17 CERT Area gathering/staging areas, the EOC, and Fire Stations in order to test our ability to provide backup, parallel and disaster comms for EC/Ken CERT Areas, the FD, and EOC. There will be at least one message sent and received between each area. Mobile stations will also be utilized. So get your mobile antennas, clip boards, pencils, connectors, and batteries charged. Please contact Hal, KK6NDF, if you would like to help in the planning/staging of this SET.

Minutes

Please find the Karo-Echo April 9, 2018 meeting minutes at <https://www.karoecho.net/documents> labeled as "MinutesKE_April9_2018.doc"

Announcement:

Field Day:

2018 Field Day is coming up

A portable 50 watt 2 m/70 cm radio station equipped with Anderson Powerpole connectors, including 12v batteries, a folding tripod mast stand, a high gain portable antenna, coax currently being equipped.

KARO-ECHO has repurposed one 45 Watt Kenwood TK-760HG-1 transceiver for 2M operation with all CoCo County RACES, CERT, and nearby RACES/ARES frequencies programmed. If this proves useful we will repurpose others.

Announcement

We need a **Net Manager** for the Thursday Night KARO-ECHO Net.

The Net Manager shall be appointed by the Board of Directors (see 11. above) and shall:

Manage the weekly Net according to guidelines established by the Board

Arrange for Net Control Stations (NCS)

Arrange a schedule of Net Control Stations (NCS) by soliciting volunteers to fill slots at least one week in advance.

Transmit relevant bulletins/announcements on the weekly net.

Receive and archive net session reports regarding the callsigns of check-ins, the total number of check-ins, total time of net, and number of written messages passed. A copy of the weekly archive should be sent to the Emergency Coordinator (EC), KM6HBO.

Report to the membership at regular meetings

Arrange for announcements during the Net of the date, time, and location of the next Regular or Special or Plenary KARO-ECHO meeting

Follow the recommended standard ARRL Net Management procedures or improve upon them.

The Net Manager may delegate Net responsibility to assistant net managers as desired.

We are in great need for a **PR/Outreach Recruitment Leader -- Duties:**

Increase KARO-ECHO membership by recruiting new and old hams to participate in both the KARO-ECHO net and the meetings.

We need a Newsletter Editor. Duties: Produce and distribute a monthly Newsletter before the monthly KARO-ECHO regular monthly meeting containing the meeting announcement (Time, date, and place), the proposed agenda, the minutes of the last meeting, upcoming drills, activities, and related disaster services information.

Please volunteer for Net Control. Why? Because you will be better able to help us help each other in a disaster once you **learn how by doing**.

We also need volunteers for our **Technical Maintenance Committee** (maintain equipment installations, fix, and install new equipment) at all agency installations. Thanks to Mike, KM6CXI and Frank, K6FAC who have volunteered to join the committee. We can use more volunteers.

EBARC FIELD DAY MEETING

Date: Friday June 8, 7:30 pm -- Speaker: Ken Fowler, KO6NO -- Field Day 2018 Planning

Location: EL SOBRANTE UNITED METHODIST, 5151 ARGYLE ROAD, EL SOBRANTE, CA 94803

“Field Day is an annual event where hams all over the US and Canada take their communications gear out into the field, erect portable antennas, operate with portable/emergency power, pitch tents, and contact other such stations all over the US via Morse Code, Data Modes, SSB, FM, AM, Satellite, etc.

June 23/24 are the Field Day dates for 2018. Our June meeting is traditionally the time we work on preparations for probably the biggest event of the year for EBARC and most other ham clubs. So come hear and contribute to a discussion about this year's Field Day. Find out how you can get involved and how much fun you can have and knowledge gained from participating in this event.”

Red Flag Fire Patrol 2018

NALCO ARES/RACES has been providing Berkeley Fire Red Flag Fire Patrols in the East Bay Hills for many years. Ivan, WA6PVV from Kensington used to help out on the Kensington side. NALCO has mentioned that they would like to see Ivan's old fire patrol route reestablished and KAROECHO and NALCO have begun discussion on how to do that. El Cerrito Fire Marshall Dave Gibson also is 100% behind the idea, but details have yet to be established regarding look out posts, frequencies, activation methods, etc. Hopefully, this will be a beneficial activity between EC/Ken Fire, Berkeley Fire Joint Command, KARO-ECHO, and NALCO ARES/RACES. Please check the events page for more as this develops.

FAGES II Scout Hike – Date - Saturday, June 2nd, 2018, 7:00 am - 7:00 pm

This is a 20 Mile Boy Scout Hike that begins at the top of McBride Ave in Richmond at Alvarado Park and continues through Wildcat Canyon and on. See:

<http://www.mdscbsa.org/events/fages-ii/>

Communications will be provided by ham radio utilizing 145.11Mhz repeater or other frequencies. This is excellent experience to test out our portable and mobile equipment, while operating on a net utilizing tactical callsigns.

Please check our EVENTS PAGE to learn how you can get involved

If you desire to be removed from this email list, please email Don, NI6A
NI6A@ARRL.NET

Note: The KARO-ECHO Agenda for Monday May 14, 2018 Meeting see:

<https://www.karoecho.net/documents>

The KARO-ECHO **Net Protocol and Net Log** for Net Control Stations (rev). See:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/14t56EyuLyaZnp_UwjGkxldX65RSdjlq1FSyD5zKbghg/edit

The KARO-ECHO **Minutes of the April 9**, 2018 Meeting see:

<https://www.karoecho.net/documents>